

The interior of the Capilla Mayor, is ornamented with several rows of statues, and some handsome funereal monuments, forming together a sort of transparent wall of sculpture on each of its sides. In the midst of a series of mitred archbishops, and coroneted princes, the figure of a peasant occupies one of the most conspicuous positions. It stands on the left side, as you face the High Altar, and about twenty feet from the pavement. This statue represents a celebrated historical personage. Alonzo the Eighth, when penetrating across the Sierra Morena into Andalucia, in search of the Moorish army under the King of Morocco, Mahomed ben Jacob, was in danger of losing the fruit of his exertions, in bringing together the forces of the Kings of Aragon and Navarre, together with numerous other confederates. He had led the combined army into a defile, in which he would have had to receive the attack of the Moor at an insuperable disadvantage. The hostile forces occupied a height called the Puerto del Miradal.

It was at the moment that retreat was the subject of deliberation, that a peasant presented himself, and offered to guide the army out of the pass. Having assured himself of the man's sincerity, Alonzo put himself under his conduct, and was led to the summit of the mountain, where he



found himself on the border of an immense plain. This decided the great victory of las Navas de Tolosa gained over the Moors on the 16th of July, 1212. Alonzo ordered a statue of the peasant to be placed in this cathedral. He is represented in a costume not unlike that of an ancient Roman rustic, a sort of tunic reaching to the knees, and his face is covered with a profuse beard.

The interior of the choir is the work of Felipe de Borgoña, and Berruguete; the latter having been employed, after the death of Felipe de Borgoña, in 1548, in continuing the sculptures. The entire south side was left for him to complete; after which he added a group in marble, representing the Transfiguration, placed rather injudiciously, since it out-tops the screen or back of the choir; thus presenting to the view of those who enter from the western or grand entrance, and who are more likely to have come with the intention of viewing the ornaments, than the canons who are seated in the choir—the back of the subject, or rather, forms which represent no subject whatever. There is a Virgin on a pedestal in the centre of the eastern end of the choir, turning her back to the bronze railing which separates it from the transept. This statue has occupied its present position ever since the erection of the cathedral; and it is probable



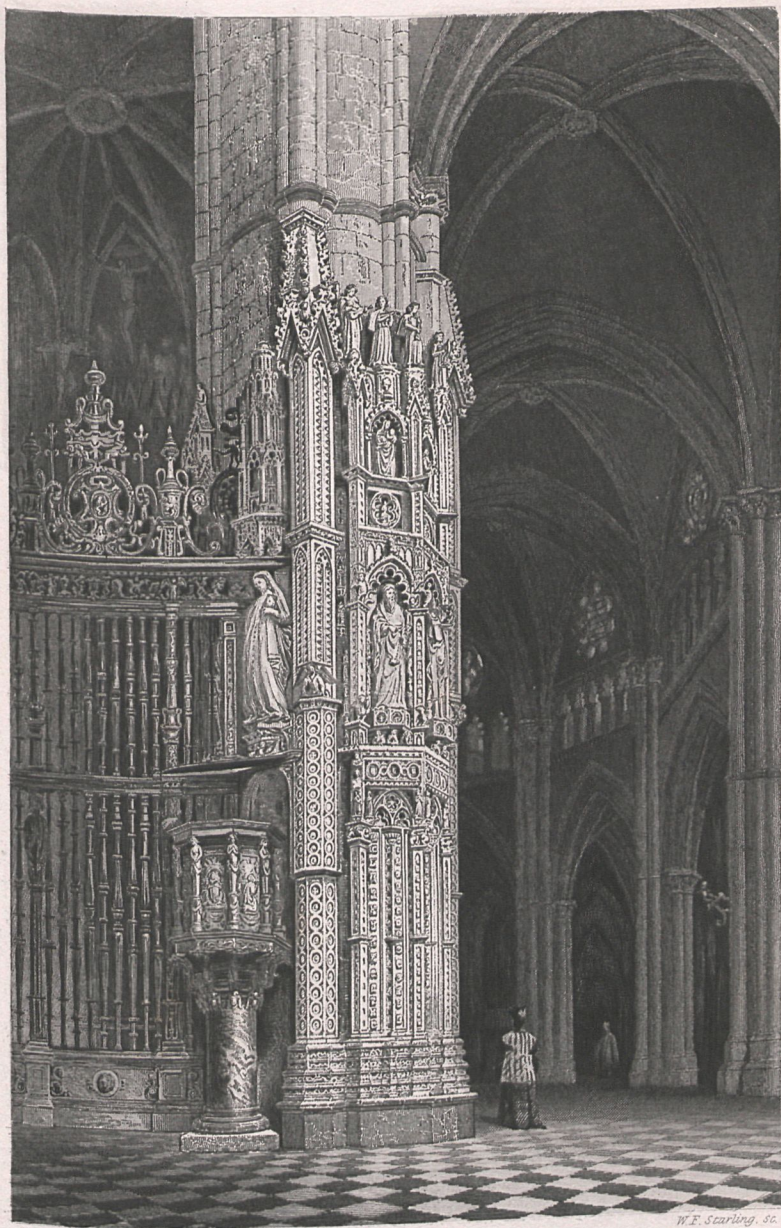
would long since have quitted it, but for a still greater inconvenience consequent on its removal. The attempt was recently made, when a mass of water issued with much violence from beneath the pedestal, and putting to flight the canons who were assembled to preside at the operation, instantly inundated the whole church. The virgin occupies probably the site of the fountain which must have been the centre of the court, at the period of the existence of the mosque. However that may be, the spot is the exact centre of the present edifice.

At the two eastern angles of the quadrangle, formed by the intersection of the transept and principal nave, close to the railing of the *capilla mayor* are two pulpits of bronze, excellently wrought; supported on short pillars of rare marbles.

A tall pyramidal Gothic edifice\* of gilded and painted wood, rising to the full height of the ceiling, stands in front of a column of the second nave from

\* The Author has in every instance made use of the word Gothic, in preference to the employment of any sort of periphrasis; considering that the chief intention of a name is, not that its application should accord with its derivation, but rather that it should present to all who know it, or have dictionaries, an identical meaning, in order that the idea of the individual employing it may be speedily caught. Now the word Gothic having always been applied to this architecture, it is comprehended. A dismounted highwayman is termed a pad. The oblong area in the centre of Madrid is called a door. "What's in a name?"





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INTERIOR OF THE CATHEDRAL, TOLEDO.







the north side. All its sides are open, and furnished with bronze railings, through which is seen an altar, raised on three or four steps. In the centre of the altar is inserted a marble slab—a highly prized relic, being the stone on which the Virgin placed her foot, on the occasion of her appearing in the cathedral in *propria personâ* to the Archbishop San Ildefonso. This peculiar favour bestowed on the saint—and a robe with which she invested him with her own hands, were bestowed, according to the historian Mariana, in recompense of his zeal in opposing the doctrine of the two Frenchmen, Pelagio and Helvidio, whose writings and preachings tended to shake the belief in the virginity of the Saviour's mother. The occurrence is thus described :

“The night immediately preceding the feast of the Annunciation, the archbishop entered the church, surrounded by several of the clergy. As they entered, the cathedral appeared filled with a brilliant light. Those who accompanied the saint, overcome with terror, turned and fled. Remaining alone, he advanced to the foot of the high altar, and fell on his knees; when, on the chair from which it was his custom to deliver his exhortations to the people,—clothed in more than human majesty—appeared the mother of Christ, who addressed him in the following words:—‘This gift, brought from Heaven,



shall be the reward of the virginity which thou hast preserved in thy body, joined with purity of mind, and ardour of faith; and for having defended our virginity.'

"Having thus spoken, she placed on him, with her own hands, a robe, which she commanded him to wear on the celebration of her festivals, and those of her Son."

The representations of this scene, from which is derived the claim of superior sanctity assumed by this cathedral, are multiplied both in marble and on canvas in all parts of the edifice, as well as in almost all the churches of Toledo. In most cases, the execution of them has been intrusted to unskilful hands. The best specimen is that executed in marble over the small altar I have just noticed. It is remarkable for the graceful and good-humoured expression of the Virgin, and the easy, almost merry, demeanour of her celestial attendants.

The marble box which contains the Host is let into the altar-piece, of which it appears to form a part of the surface, only projecting slightly as its sides are convex. Turning on a pivot, it presents four different fronts, each representing, in well executed relief, a different scene in the Virgin's life.



## LETTER X.

CAFÉS. WEDDING CEREMONY. CATHEDRAL CONTINUED. ALCAZAR  
 HOSPITAL OF SANTA CRUZ. CONVENT OF LA CONCEPTION.  
 MYSTERIOUS CAVERN. CONVENT OF SANTA FE, OR OF SANTIAGO.  
 SONS-IN-LAW OF THE CID.

Toledo.

ONE of the first contrasts between this and other countries, which forces itself on the observation, is the amalgamation of the different classes of society in public places of resort. The grandee is far too sure of his personal importance and consideration, to entertain any fear of its being diminished by contact with those of inferior rank; and the peasant is far too proud to importune his superiors by any indiscreet efforts at familiarity.

At Burgos I found the *Gefe politico*, or governor of the province, sipping his lemonade in the evening at the *café*; his elbow brushing the back of a mayoral of a diligence, and surrounded by an assemblage of all classes of the male inhabitants of the town. These *cafés* are curious establishments; they



are divided into two classes—the Café, properly so called, and the Botilleria—in which tea and coffee are not usually called for, but all the other refreshments of the café; such as *helados* (frozen beverages of all sorts), *sorbetes* (ices), liqueurs, wines, &c. These latter are the resort, in some towns, of both sexes, and indeed the cafés also in a less degree. But the etiquette in these things differs in the different provinces.

At Madrid, where foreign customs first penetrate, ladies are rarely seen in these resorts; by which they are considerable losers. No doubt, were the attractions of French cafés sufficiently powerful, your sex would not have withered them, by their disdain, into the uncivilized dens which they are. You are not of course invited by the billiard tables, or by the allurements of black coffee and cognac; but were the waiters to set before you a tumbler of frozen lemonade after a July evening's dusty walk, you would speedily bring such habits into fashion.

Much as the refreshments of Spanish cafés have been celebrated, their fame is surpassed by the reality. It is only when you have panted through a southern summer's day, and breathed an atmosphere of fire, that you are disposed to receive the illustration of the full sense of the word refreshment; and it is then they hand you a brobdignag goblet, brim



full of frozen orange-water or lemonade, or snow-white orgeat—which, from the imperceptible inroads made by the teaspoon on its closing-up surface, appears likely to last you the whole night. These and other similar luxuries, including the ices, at which those of a Grange or Tortoni would melt with jealousy, are plentiful in second and third-rate towns, and rank among the necessaries of life, rather than as objects of indulgence. They are of course cheap, or it would not answer.

The poor apply to the distributors of iced barley-water, who carry about a sort of cask, strapped between their shoulders, and containing ice in the centre, to maintain the frigidity of the beverage. By lowering and advancing the left shoulder, the vendor pours the contents of the cask through a small neck or pipe into the glasses, which he carries in a flat basket with cellaret partitions. A tumbler of this costs a halfpenny; its imbibing occupies two or three minutes, and assuages for hours the sufferings of the thirstiest palate.

At Madrid, the cafés have each its political colour; except that called del Principe, after the adjoining theatre. In this, politics are less characterised, literature having here taken up her quarters. It is probable that she is a less profitable customer, being habitually less thirsty. Accordingly, on put-



ting your head into the door, you see a saloon far more brilliantly lighted up than the others; but the peripatetic doctrines seem to prevail. Few persons are seated at the tables; and instead of the more profitable wear and tear of broken glasses, the proprietor probably finds substituted a thankless annual item for worn out floors. In the same street there is a club; but this is an exotic importation and on the exclusive plan, not quite of London, but of the Paris *cercles*.

In the cafés of Toledo, on the days of *fiesta*, the fair sex predominates, especially in summer. The great resort is, however, the Zocodover, from nine to ten in the evening. This little irregularly formed *plaza* is crowded like an assembly-room, and possesses its rows of trees, although a respectable oak would almost fill it.

A *soirée* has occasionally been known to be given in Toledo, but it is an occurrence of much rarity, and mostly occasioned by some unusual event,—the arrival of a public singer, or, still more unusual, a newly made fortune. The other evening I was admitted to one, the pretext for which was a wedding. This ceremony takes place at the residence of the bride, and although a subsequent formality is necessary in the Church, its delay does not defer the validity of the union, nor its consummation. The wedding-



day arrived, the families and friends of both parties assemble at eight in the evening.

The bride was distinguishable by a white veil or *mantilla* in the middle seat of a sofa, between her mother and sister, who rose to receive the guests. A narrow table had been dressed up into a temporary altar, and furnished with a crucifix and candles. All the party being arrived, a priest left his chair, and entered an adjoining room to robe; on his reappearance the company rose and flocked round the bride and bridegroom, who stood together before the priest, doing penance each with a long wax-light in the right hand, held in a muslin handkerchief.

The ceremony lasts about ten minutes without any change of posture. The priest departs to unrobe; the miserable bride and blushing bridegroom receive felicitations; and all resume their seats, and look at each other.

Presently chocolate was handed round, and an attempt at conversational murmur commenced, afterwards ices. And now the minister took a formal leave of the company, after complimenting the bride. Two or three other holy men, obedient to the signal, carried out their interminable hats before them: when a sudden revolution broke out. At the closing of the door on the hindmost ecclesiastic



the bridegroom rushed to the altar, and grasping with one hand the crucifix, and with the other two of the candlesticks, ran to the apartment that had assumed the character of vestry, and deposited them there, followed by officious friends bearing the remaining articles, until every awe-compelling symbol had disappeared. One or two guitars were extracted from their hiding-places under sofas, and sent forth careless but lively preludes. The men stood up and circulated; the women talked and laughed; a quadrille was speedily formed, and concluded; waltzing followed, and forfeits, and whatever you like, and—"the arrangements were on a scale of costly magnificence, and the festivities were prolonged, &c."

But these events are rare in Toledo. The everyday amusements consist in an infamous theatre, and the promenade; this is only on Saints' days; but these are almost every day. On six or seven occasions in the year, these promenades are absolute events, and much looked forward to. It is necessary to inquire which is the promenade patronised by the saint of the great day, whoever he is, and take your place in the tide, for no one absents himself.

Dresses for these celebrations are things premeditated; and the effect produced, and all the little events and rencontres of the day form for each belle, thrilling subjects of retrospection. *Man-*



*tillas* may be trimmed, and innocent plots woven for these occasions, without danger of disappointment by clouds or storms; and instead of the Virgin being implored that the sun may shine, who never disappoints them, she is sometimes requested to inspire some ruse for a momentary escape from his too searching effulgence.

Here may fair foreigners feast their eyes on fawn-coloured *majos*, whose every step (although no more exalted beings than butchers, postillions, horsedealers, and such like) would be envied by Antinous and Apollo. I should advise no veils, nor winkings, nor blinkings on these occasions, but eyes wide open—for never more (the Pyrenees once repassed) will their orbits expand to the forms and costumes of blackguards half so beautiful.

But these are subjects slightly unsuited to the interior of the cathedral, of our presence in which we are evidently forgetful. The Mozarabic Chapel, founded by Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros, is situated under the southern tower, and contains a Virgin and Child executed in Mosaic, and a curious old fresco painting, representing the battle of Oran, at which the Cardinal was victorious over the Arabs. This chapel is set apart for the performance of the Mozarabic ritual, still retained by a portion of the population of Toledo, and the exercise of which